Literacy mprovement PARTNERSHIP

Leveraging Learning Huddles to Improve Instruction

Kim Austin (REL West at WestEd), Marianne Justus (REL West at WestEd), Christine Venturis (Center for the Collaborative Classroom)

PROJECT OVERVIEW AT-A-GAN AT-A-GLANCE

WHO Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd, Washoe County School District,

> Center for the Collaborative Classroom, Nevada's Northwest Regional Professional

Development Program (NWRPDP)

Improvement partnership focused on writing instruction

WHERE Initially two elementary schools, principals and district coaches, scaling to more schools

in Reno, NV

WHEN Five-year contract; Year 1: 2017–2018 school year

WHY Shift instruction to improve writing outcomes

Partnership Goals

- 1. Leverage an improvement approach to shift teacher practice
- 2. Learn together about supporting students as writers
- Build district capacity to sustain and scale the work over time

Instructional Practices

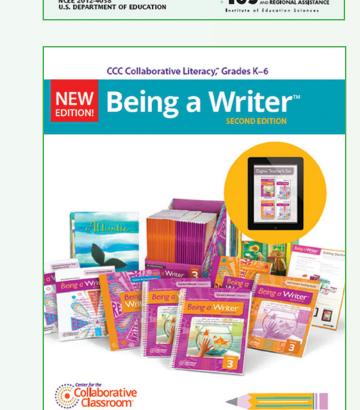
Instructional practices and student learning opportunities were identified by examining the **core features** of the *Being a Writer* curriculum, focusing on **typical challenges** that teachers face, and aligning these with the **evidence base** for K–5 writing instruction. Having a common curriculum is key.

Teachers' discussions and inquiries are unified by:

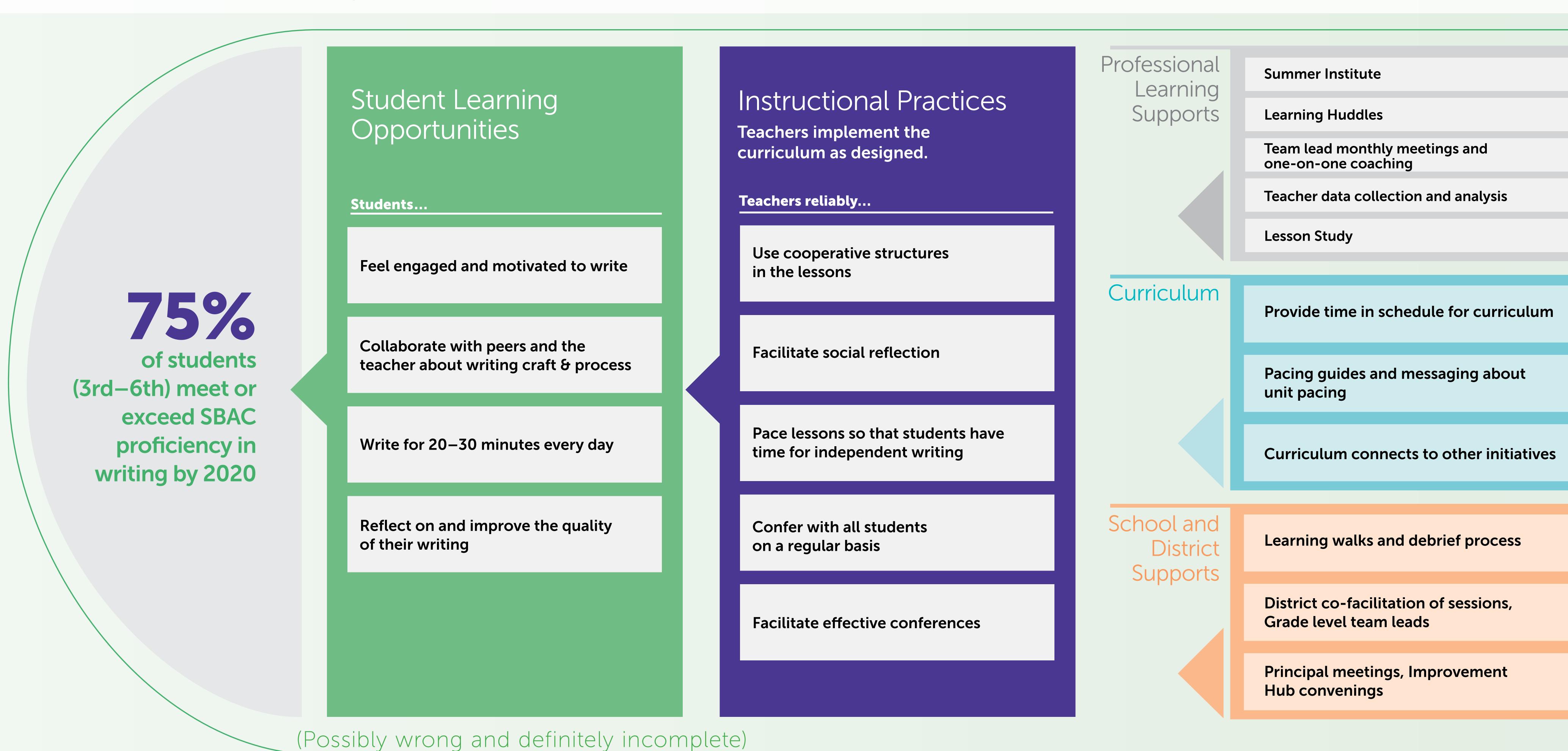
Predictable Lesson Structure: Common Pedagogy:

- Getting Ready to Write Lessons
- Independent Writing Time
- Sharing and Reflecting
- Writing workshop approach:
- Writer's craft and genre study
- Writing process: brainstorm, draft, revise
- Writing conferences

- Social and academic are integrated
- Neutral facilitation
- Cooperative structures: Partner communication and collaboration



March 2018 v. 11 DRIVER DIAGRAM



Learning Huddles

What is a learning huddle?

- Thirty-minute discussion in grade-level teams
- Guided by grade-level team members with specific roles (facilitator, time-keeper, note-taker, process observer)
- Focused on high-leverage instructional practices
- Grounded in reflecting on practice with evidence

Learning Huddle Structure

- 1. Roles and norms
- . Check-in
- . Round robin: Successes and Challenges OR Analyze instructional data
- Discussion: Unpack one challenge OR one data set
- 5. Next steps: Change ideas

Fall Topic: **Spring Topic: Winter Topic: Establishing social routines** Protecting time for Frequent and effective conferring independent writing Become Track Track HUDDLE7 conferences HUDDLE9

66 Tracking helps me to make sure I get to all the parts of the lesson and see how much time I spend on all of the lessons.

Design Principles

- Work-embedded professional learning
- Reflection on practice
- Disciplined, iterative testing with practical measures
- **Teacher collaboration**, choice, and agency
- **Teacher leadership:** Team leads facilitate grade-level teams
- Institutional partnerships: school, district, regional PD with curricular content and research support

Instructional Change Ideas

How can we ensure 15–20 minutes of writing every day? Emerging ideas:

Plan for timing

- Backwards-plan the lesson, starting with writing time
- Focus on the most important parts of the lesson

Monitor time during the lesson

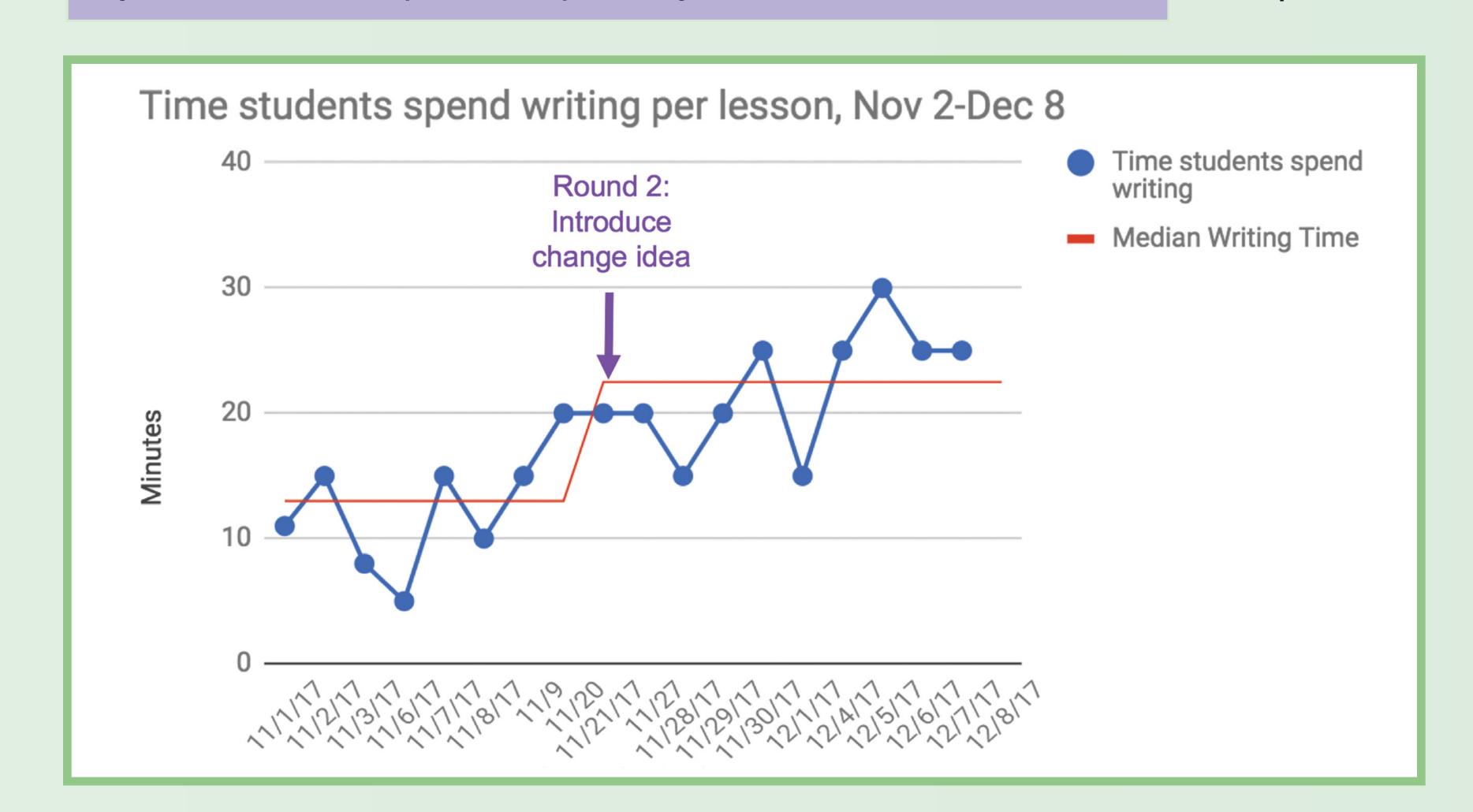
- Use a timer
- Monitor/manage teacher talk
- Only call on a few students to share



- Be mindful of the teachable moment
- Shift schedules
- Move another lesson to make room for writing

Add another lesson per week

Improve transitions



X Challenges: What do we need to refine?

- Discussion facilitation skills vary
- Teachers struggle with analyzing and learning from data
- Centralized data collection and display are time-consuming
- Cultivating an improvement mindset: Some teachers are eager to test ideas; others feel things are "fine as is"

Successes: What have we observed?

- Teachers are highly engaged in the learning huddles, learn from them, and get ideas from colleagues to try out and test
- Teachers are collecting data about their own practice, noticing things in their practice that they didn't notice before
- Teachers are making measurable changes to their practice (so far, around lesson pacing)
- Tracking, itself, is a powerful change idea